

Lew Turner View-Master Cartoon Artist

By J. Clement

Revised Nov 2016

Lew Turner created stereo drawings in the late 1950s and early 1970s. He invented a machine which was capable of creating stereo drawings with exact depth. But since he wouldn't sell the machine to View-Master, Pete Dorsett created a more free hand method of generating stereo drawings. Lew's machine was capable of creating perfect parallel lines and flat surfaces with no depth irregularities. Pete's method had a freer look, but he could not create flat surface without depth jitter. In the early 70s Lew did a series of packets where the drawings were combined with dioramas. The drawings and diorama photos were successfully merged by Hank Gaylord.

The combined diorama/drawings generally looked good and combined the virtues of each technique. However, sometimes the drawings could be improperly aligned with respect to the dioramas. The "Wendy the Good Witch" reel in the "Casper Ghostland" packet has severe misalignment. This was probably because the dioramas were fairly dark and it was difficult to establish the alignment points. Ghostland was the first published combo packet.

The drawing method was quicker and less expensive than the artist made dioramas, so the dioramas were abandoned even though they gave more beautiful scenes with superb depth. The interim combined method was less expensive than full dioramas and had the advantage of looking more like the original movies, while preserving the realism of the dioramas.

At the same time Belgium View-Master had European 3D artists creating reels.



1958 B5263 Mighty Mouse 7 They paraded the mighty Champion of the Mice
Probably his first packet



Casper in the Jungle Book!
Test picture for Casper Ghostland – Courtesy of Wolfgang Sell

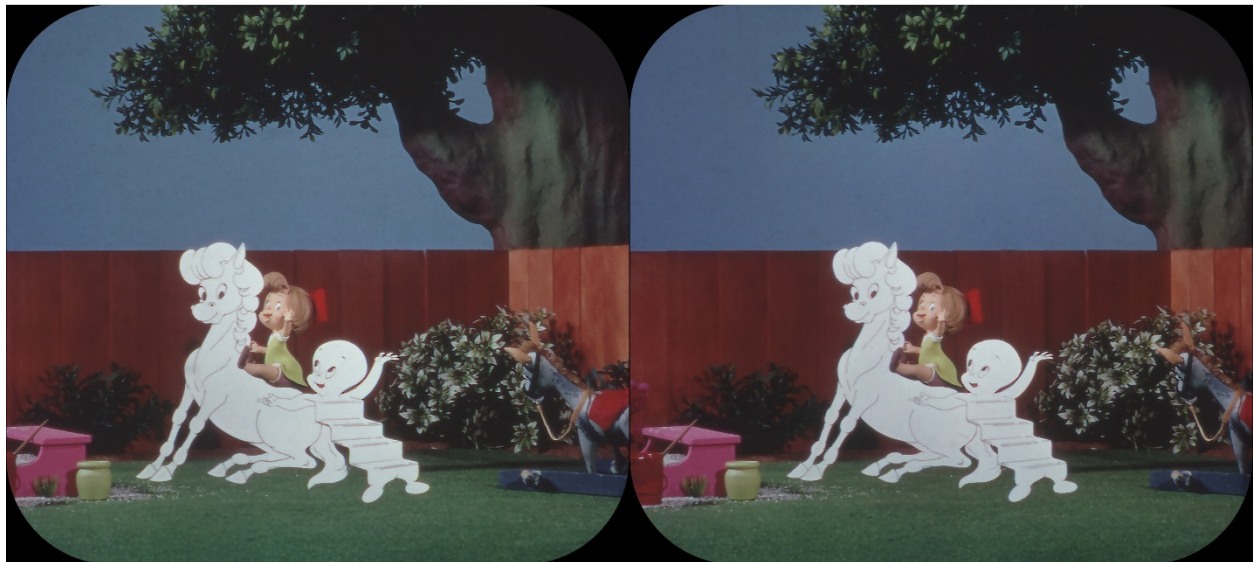


1969 B5451 Casper's Ghostland, Haunted House 7
Spooky's own BOO scared him out of the house
Diorama: Joe Liptak, Cartoons:Lew Turner, Photograpy: Hank Gaylord
, Ghosthouse: Frank Visage-uncredited

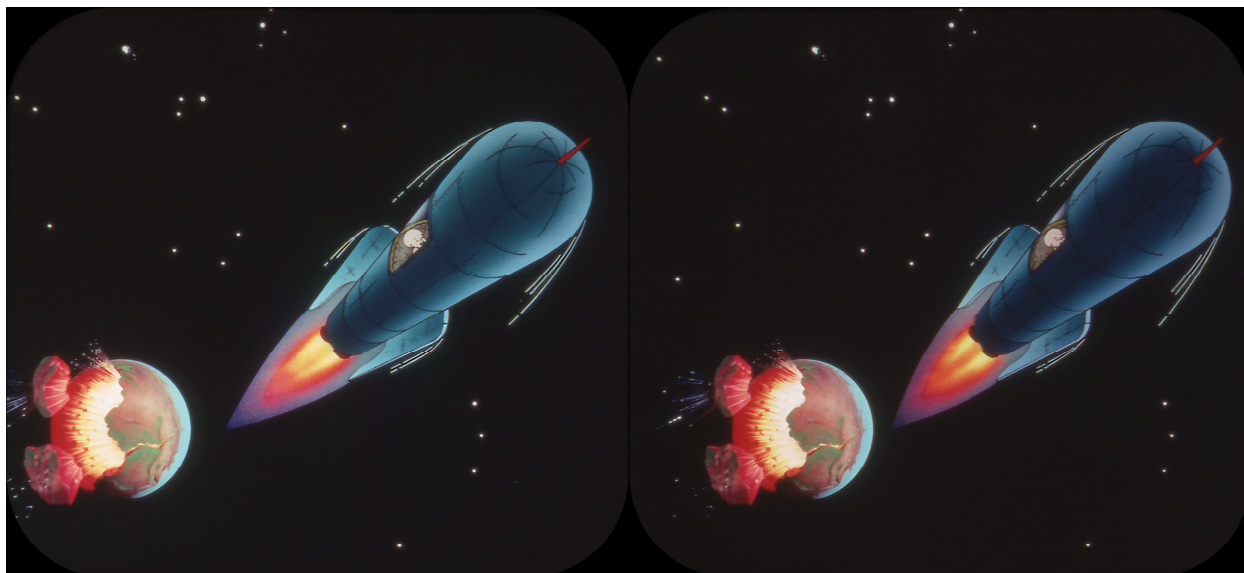


1969 B5452 Casper's Ghostland, Wendy The Good Little Witch 7
 ... and zapf they turned into three ugly toads
 Diorama: Joe Liptak, Cartoons:Lew Turner, Photography: Hank Gaylord

This fusion scene had terrible alignment that was fixed during restoration by J. Clement.



1969 B5453 Casper's Ghostland, Super Rocking Horse 3
 Casper folded himself into a set of stairs
 Diorama: Joe Liptak, Cartoons:Lew Turner, Photography: Hank Gaylord



1970 B5841 1 Superman meets Computer Crook –
 When Krypton exploded, only baby Superman survived
 Diorama: Joe Liptak, Cartoons:Lew Turner, Photography: Hank Gaylord



1971 B5513 Mickey Mouse in Clock Cleaners 4
 As he hammered his friends came flying through the window!
 Diorama: Joe Liptak, Cartoons:Lew Turner, Photography: Hank Gaylord



1972 B5491 Big Top Bunny 6 When Bugs flew from the high trapeze, Bruno let him fall
 Diorama: Joe Liptak, Cartoons:Lew Turner, Photography: Hank Gaylord



1972 B5533 Scooby Doo 6 Shaggy joined the others as they tried to outrun a huge snowball



1973 B3211 Charlotte's Web 3 ...but Wilbur was sold to Mr Zuckerman, Fern's uncle



1974 B8111 3 Forging A Nation –
Washington rode ceremonial barge to inauguration in New York
These packets were part of a series commemorating the American Bicentennial.

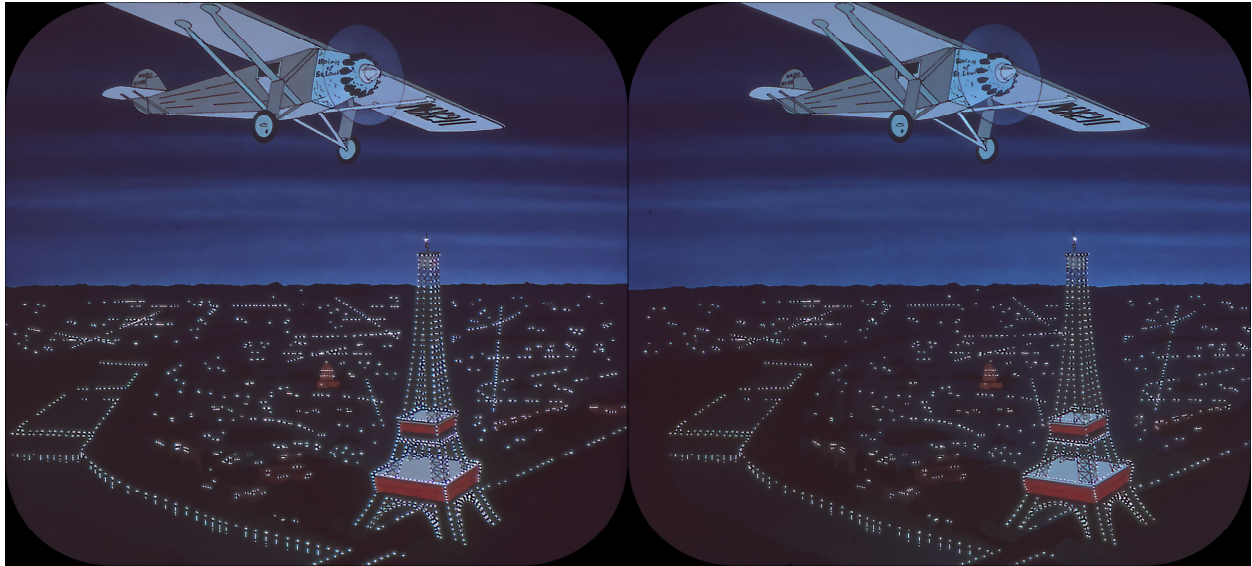


1974 B8123 7 Westward Expansion - 1897 gold rush to Klondike brought settlers to Alaska



1974 B8131 5 The 20th Century - San Francisco quake and fire left 250,000 homeless

The packets B810 to B813 are all part of a series commemorating US history for the American Bicentennial. B810 is beautifully done as dioramas created by the View-Master artistic staff. The rest were done by Lew. The scenes are all nicely done. The fourth packet B813 has 4 reels with various errors. Two reels have inking errors and one has misplaced depth in a moderate size detail. The stock market scene created the floor as a diorama while the characters and kiosks are cartooned. One large kiosk and several characters either float over the floor or dig into it. Other than these errors all of the scenes have excellent consistent depth. The stock market scene problem is actually a photography problem when the dioramas are combined with the cartoon cells. There has been some criticism of the likenesses of historical characters. The Kennedy likeness is not typical, while the FDR cartoon perfectly captures his most recognizable pose.



1974 B8132 5 The 20th Century - Lindbergh's 1927 NY-to-Paris flight made him national idol

The identification of cartoon artists was done by copyright date, credits on the booklets, and oral accounts published by Wolfgang Sell in his book “View-Master Memories.” Only the combined diorama-cartoon packets done with Joe Liptak have credits. Lew is credited up to 1972, but not thereafter. Wolfgang reports that Lew’s output decreased as he took more contract work, and that Pete did the Rescuers in 1977. Since cartoon packet production decreased in the mid 1970s and then exploded in 1977-1978 one may infer that Pete Dorsett took over then. So I dated all cartoon reels up to 1976 as Lew’s work.

At the same time as Lew was creating early reels an unknown German artist also created excellent packets using a different technique, according to Harry zur Kleinsmiede. Unfortunately the German artist died before passing on the technique. Lew and Pete worked for the Sawyers US plant, while other artists worked for the View-Master Belgium plant.

Bibliography: *View-Master Memories* by Mary Ann & Wolfgang Sell

Partial List of presumed Lew Turner's packets:

1. 1958 B526 Mighty Mouse
2. 1959 B311 Pinocchio
3. 1959 B531 Bugs Bunny with Porky Pig and Daffy Duck
4. 1961 B532 1001 Dalmations
5. 1961 B533 Casper
6. 1962 B515 Bullwinkle
7. 1962 B516 Popeye
8. 1964 B509 Woody Woodpecker
9. 1966 B535 Secret Squirrel and Atom Ant
10. 1966 B537 Blondie and Dagwood
11. 1967 B539 Dennis the Menace
12. 1968 B546 Fantastic Voyage
13. 1969 B545 Casper's Ghostland (with Joe Liptak, Hank Gaylord)
14. 1970 B365 Aristocats
15. 1970 B584 Superman meets Computer Crook (with Joe Liptak, Hank Gaylord)
16. 1971 B551 Mickey Mouse Clock Cleaners (with Joe Liptak, Hank Gaylord)
17. 1972 B552 The Hair Bear Bunch
18. 1972 B549 Bugs Bunny in Big Top Bunny (with Joe Liptak, Hank Gaylord)
19. 1972 B553 Scooby Doo
20. 1973 B321 Charlotte's Web
21. 1974 B555 Star Trek Mr Spock's Time Trek
22. 1974 B811 Forging a Nation
23. 1974 B812 Westward Expansion
24. 1974 B813 The 20th Century (Scene B6 is diorama-cartoon)
25. 1975 B550 Shazam! The Return of Black Adam
26. 1975 B574 Archie
27. 1976 B583 Flash Gordon

Contemporary packets by an unknown German artist for Belgium View-Master
Artist identification by Harry zur Kleinsmiede

28. 1958 B528 Mickey Mouse – Brave Little Tailor, Pluto the Pointer, The Toy Shop
29. 1959 B529 Pluto - Circus Dog...
30. 1959 B308 Disney's Sleeping Beauty